

# Indian Rose Annual - IRA 2014

## Roses in many lands

Girija and M.S.Viraraghavan

In the summer of 2013, we were fortunate to visit many rose gardens and meet old rose friends in Europe, the USA and Scotland.

Our first port of call was the exotic rose nursery, Roseraie du Desert, run by our friends Becky and John Hook. Their garden is located in southern France, quite near the city of Toulouse, famous for its Airbus industry. The Hooks are specialists in Tea roses and their close relatives—perhaps their collection is the most comprehensive in the entire world, and well worth a visit by Indian rose lovers, since the Teas do so well for us. Many of the old stalwarts – Mrs. B.R.Cant, Lady Hillingdon, Madame Falcot which are so common in India were grown to perfection, with a supporting cast of lovely climbing Teas. We saw old favourites like Marechal Niel and Lamarque, as well as some unfamiliar ones, including Souvenir d'Alphonse Lavallee, a climbing Hybrid Perpetual with exquisite large flowers of the darkest red with a hint of purple. Many of our roses were also to be seen including the Teas, Faith Whittlesey, Krishna's Peach, Padmasambhava ( Lotus Born), New Blush and the hybrid gigantea, Sir Henry Collett, named for the discoverer of the species *R.gigantea* in Upper Burma. John has himself constructed the huge wide wooden pergolas on the rose terraces, and they added greatly to the overall enchantment of the garden.

From France we traveled to Portugal, to the World Heritage city of Sintra, near Lisbon. The purpose of our visit was two-fold – to see the unique rose garden and architectural splendour of Monserrate, a charmingly restored palace and garden, which has strong Indian connections, as well as Penha Verde, another heritage property, where we hoped to view an ancient stone pillar dating to 1297 C.E., which has a Sanskrit inscription relating to roses. This pillar was originally part of the Somnath temple in Gujarat, now submerged under the sea.

The gardens of Monserrate represent an unique collection of sub-tropical flora, where many roses, which would require greenhouse protection in Europe, thrive exuberantly in the open. Planted on a grand scale, in a sheltered area, just below the Great Lawn, are roses of the China, Tea and Noisette types so well known to our older rosarians. Of great personal interest was the collection of gigantea hybrids, planted for sentimental reasons, as the first gigantea hybrid Belle Portugaise was bred by Henri Cayeux in 1903 at the Lisbon Botanical Garden. Our

friend, the landscape architect Gerald Luckhurst, had planted some of our own Indian hybrids of *R.gigantea*, including Manipur Magic, Golden Threshold, Amber Cloud, Sir George Watt and many others, as modern examples of the same strain. An unique feature of the planting is the way in which these roses are allowed to reach their full potential – each variety covering well over 100 sq.ft!!

From Monserrate we went to Penha Verde, whose garden hosts the two stone pillars from Somnath, ( we had thought there was just one stone tablet) positioned on either side of steps leading to a chapel, with breath-taking views of the valley beyond. The Sanskrit inscription engraved on the pillars, translated by no less a person than Dr. K. M. Munshi in his book “Somanatha, the Shrine Eternal”, speaks of the gardener’s guild in Somnath being allotted land on the condition that it supplied 200 white roses and 2000 white oleanders everyday to the temple.

From the point of view of Indian rose history this inscription is very significant indeed. Clearly, white roses which flowered throughout the year could only have reached India from China (from where continuous flowering roses evolved). Since the inscription dates to 1297 C.E., roses from China must have reached India substantially earlier. One speculates that Gujarat being near the Indian end of the fabled Silk Route, (connecting China through Central Asia to India, and Europe) roses could have reached along with traders.. Another possibility is that Chinese ships calling at the great port of Surat on the Gujarat coast could have been the source of these new roses.( A fascinating account of how, for nostalgic reasons, Chinese sailors carried roses in pots , is available in Peter Valder’s book “ Garden Plants of China”).

From Sintra we retraced our steps to London where we saw the Great Conservatory in Kew Gardens ( it was too early for roses) before leaving for the U.S., to Louisville, Kentucky, and our son’s home. While there, we made two trips to Florida and neighbouring states, in search of warm climate roses. On our first visit we saw several enchanting gardens including the world famous Fairchild Tropical Botanical Garden and the exquisitely landscaped Murakami Japanese Garden, in Miami. But there were no roses in either garden, though there was plenty else to admire, like unbelievably exotic gardenias and rare trees.

Our next trip to Florida started from Washington D.C., where we visited Hillside Garden in Montgomery County, Maryland, which has a sunken garden planted with a stunning collection of modern roses, including many All America Rose Selections, which do so well for us. But the highlight was, surprisingly, a glorious bush of that wonderful David Austin English rose, Graham Thomas, covered in golden yellow blooms as well as the exuberant profusion of white climbing hydrangeas on the ancient trees.

Meanwhile our rose friend Gene Waering had arrived, as we had planned a road trip to Florida seeing many rose gardens en route. We first drove to the charming university town of Asheville, North Carolina, where the well known Biltmore House and Garden are located. Belonging to the wealthy Vanderbilt family, the garden which covers several hundred acres, has a breathtaking collection of ornamental trees and plants. But we were focused on the newly started Rose Trial Ground, and its surrounding rose garden. The trial area which is meticulously maintained by Paul Zimmerman, features a host of entries from leading rose growers of the world. But the Gold Medal winner this year was a white climbing rose from an amateur, Bill Athy of New Zealand ( see Paul Zimmerman's article in this rose annual) which testifies to the fairness of the trial. In fact special care is taken to ensure that amateur raised roses are provided with a level playing field, to compete on equal terms with the professionals.

At Asheville we were delighted to see a plant of our Bodhisattwa ( Magic East) in bloom in the garden of our hosts, Chris and Rick Manheim.

The next day we visited the well known rose nursery, Roses Unlimited, in Laurel, South Carolina., owned by distinguished rose growers and our friends Pat Henry and Bill Paterson who had given us a tremendous boost by introducing some of our roses in the US. We saw the beautifully maintained grounds and roses in Pat's home. Spectacular potted specimens of our roses, Faith Whittlesey, Krishna's Peach, and Emina, all grown to gigantic proportions, were a source of great encouragement. Rose Unlimited specializes in growing roses on their own roots and the standard of the plants has to be seen to be believed, dispelling notions that roses can only be grown as budded plants.

Our next visit was to see the botanic garden in Orangeburg, southern South Carolina State, but en route we spent a very informative half day in the Magnolian Grove Arboretum of Dick and Anita Figlar. The Figlars are world authorities on the genus magnolia and their garden, charmingly located in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, features extensive plantings of an amazing range of magnolias, including several of the newly introduced evergreen species from South Asia.

The Edisto Memorial Garden in Orangeburg ('memorial' because it is dedicated to the soldiers of the state who had died in various wars) has a large formal rose garden planted with a host of modern varieties as well as a separate area housing a collection of heritage roses, mainly Noisettes. The spectacular appearance of the garden testifies to the careful upkeep, which is scenically situated on the bank of the 'black river', called Edisto. Tall trees, many of the southern U.S. magnolia, *M. grandiflora*, add to the overall effect.

At Edisto we were joined by our friend Pat Shanley, Vice President of the American Rose Society. Pat and Gene were pioneering the establishment of a

comprehensive collection of rose species in Edisto and we were privileged to be part of the discussions with Jay Hiers, Superintendent of Parks. If all goes well, a new species rose garden will soon be a reality.

From Orangeburg to Jacksonville, Florida, and the Orange Park Club Continental hotel, scenically located in a heritage building with an amazing view of the river, where our talk and power-point presentation on Sustainable Roses was well received by the local society members. The emphasis of the talk on evolving better roses for warm climates was welcomed by the Florida rosarians who have long struggled with modern roses bred for cold climates.

Driving southwards our next stop was at the Leu Gardens in Orlando, where we met the Historic Roses Group of the Orlando Rose Society. The heritage rose garden was planted with many warm weather roses, the Chinas and Teas. Mrs. B.R. Cant, Celine Forestier, Old Blush and Nur Mahal, hybrid musk, were in splendid bloom.

Then further south to Boynton Beach to meet Ambassador Faith Whittlesey, after whom we had named a Tea rose. This long overdue visit was a delightful interlude with the Ambassador at her charming best, making us feel very welcome.

We also visited the nearby Cool Roses nursery owned by Geoff and Deb Coolidge. Geoff has mastered the art of budding roses on *R. fortuniana* rootstock, which is so suitable for Florida and similar climates.

The final part of our Florida sojourn was to the campus of Florida Southern College in Lakeland. Romantically landscaped with buildings designed by no less an architect than the legendary Frank Lloyd Wright, Lakeland is the site for an ambitious new rose garden on the college premises, designed by the well known rose personality who is attached to the college department of horticulture, Dr Malcolm Manners, in close association with Stephen Scanniello, President of the Heritage Rose Foundation, USA. We first had a rapid tour of the rose plantings and collection of Bermuda and other warm weather roses in the college greenhouses. A glorious fragrant bed of the found rose, the Hybrid Perpetual 'Maggie' was a stunning sight, perhaps the same rose as our own red garland rose Kakinada Red; as also a planting of Mrs. B.R. Cant. The new rose garden will be located on a slight slope with the rose beds in a vast semi-circle. During our visit we could see just the layout but as we write ( November) the planting of over 300 roses has been completed, including several Viru roses.

Then began the journey home, the first leg of which was from USA to Scotland. In the background of this visit was our hybrid gigantea rose, 'Sir George Watt', named in honour of the discoverer of the species gigantea in the mountains of Manipur State in 1882. Sir George Watt was one of the most distinguished

'renaissance' men of his times, with a matchless contribution not only in botany but also in education, art and science. One of his greatest accomplishments was the monumental 9 volume Dictionary of Economic Products of India, written as far back as 1906, but still a standard work of reference.

After our successful trip in 1990 to the same area where Watt collected *R.gigantea*, we had named a rose for him. With the help of Mr. Kasturirangan of KSG Sons, we had successfully sent a plant to be grown in the Logan Botanic Garden in south-west Scotland, very near the area where Sir George had lived after his return from India.

As a prelude to our present visit we had established contact with several of his descendants and family friends, as well as with Morag Williams, the archivist at the Royal Crichton Hospital where he had worked. It was arranged for us all to meet and drive to Logan to see the rose planted there by Curator Richard Baines. It was an inspiring moment to see it climbing over 15 feet high on the enclosed garden brick wall, looking perfectly at home. Sadly not in bloom- apparently it flowers only in late August.

Another connection with Scotland was the rose 'Benares Dawn', bred in Dehra Dun by Major Saksena in the 1970's. Along with the plant of Sir George Watt, Mr. Kasturirangan had sent two plants of Benares Dawn to Major Saksena's daughter, Ruhi Thallon (who has settled in Scotland). Originally Ruhi had contacted us in India and we had helped in locating this variety with Mr. Kasturirangan. It was a pleasure to see the buds of this lovely apricot rose, nicely established in its new home. (see article " 'Sir George Watt' accompanies 'Benares Dawn' to Scotland" in the 2011 Indian Rose annual)

The final part of our rose wanderings was a visit, along with Ruhi, to the well known Toll Cross Park in Glasgow. The beautifully maintained rose beds were in full bloom. Toll Cross Park is also recognized for its rose trials, which are judged by an international jury.

Our last stop was the Queen Mary's Rose Garden in Regents Park, London, where the Millar Gault designed catenaries for climbing roses and rose beds leading to a little lake, make for a gem of a garden. We were delighted to see a glorious bed of that old stalwart, Diamond Jubilee, in tremendous form.

Thus ended our travels in search of roses but the memories will stay with us.

## Copies of the original

Indian Rose Annual 2014

## Roses in Many Lands

Mrs. Girija and Mr. M.S.Viraraghavan

In the summer of 2013, we were fortunate to visit many rose gardens and meet old rose friends in Europe, the USA and Scotland.

Our first port of call was the exotic rose nursery, Roseaie du Desert, run by our friends Becky and John Hook. Their garden is located in southern France, quite near the city of Toulouse, famous for its Airbus industry. The Hooks are specialists in Tea roses and their close relatives—perhaps their collection is the most comprehensive in the entire world, and well worth a visit by Indian rose lovers, since the Teas do so well for us. Many of the old stalwarts – Mrs. B.R.Cant, Lady Hillingdon, Madame Fulcot which are so common in India were grown to perfection, with a supporting cast of lovely climbing Teas. We saw old favourites like Marechal Niel and Lamarque, as well as some unfamiliar ones, including Souvenir d' Alphonse Lavallee, a climbing Hybrid Perpetual with exquisite large flowers of the darkest red with a hint of purple. Many of our roses were also to be seen including the Teas, Faith Whittlesey, Krishna's Peach, Padmasambhava (Lotus Born), New Blush and the hybrid gigantea, Sir Henry Collett, named for the discoverer of the species *R. gigantea* in Upper Burma. John has himself constructed the huge wide wooden pergolas on the rose terraces, and they added greatly to the overall enchantment of the garden.

From France we traveled to Portugal, to the World Heritage city of Sintra, near Lisbon. The purpose of our visit was two-fold – to see the unique rose garden and architectural splendour of Monserrate, a charmingly restored palace and garden, which has strong Indian connections, as well as Penha Verde, another heritage property, where we hoped to view an ancient stone pillar dating to 1297 C.E., which has a Sanskrit inscription relating to roses. This pillar was originally part of the Somnath temple in Gujarat, now submerged under the sea.

The gardens of Monserrate represent an unique collection of sub-tropical flora, where many roses, which would require greenhouse protection in Europe, thrive exuberantly in the open. Planted on a grand scale, in a sheltered area, just below the Great Lawn, are roses of the China, Tea and Noisette types so well known to our older rosarians. Of great personal interest was the collection of gigantea hybrids, planted for sentimental reasons, as the first gigantea hybrid Belle Portugaise was bred by Henri Cayeux in 1903 at the Lisbon Botanical Garden. Our friend, the landscape architect Gerald Luckhurst, had planted some of our own Indian hybrids of *R. gigantea*, including Manipur Magic, Golden Threshold, Amber Cloud, Sir George Watt and many others, as modern examples of the same strain. An unique feature of the planting is the way in which these roses are allowed to reach their full potential – each variety covering well over 100 sq.ft!!

From Monserrate we went to Penha Verde, whose garden hosts the two stone pillars from Somnath, ( we had thought there was just one stone tablet) positioned on either side of steps leading to a chapel, with breath-taking views of the valley beyond. The Sanskrit inscription engraved on the pillars called the Cintra Prashasti, translated by no less a person than Dr. K. M. Munshi in his book "Somanatha, the Shrine Eternal", speaks of the gardener's guild in Somnath being allotted land on the condition that it supplied 200 white roses and 2000 white oleanders every day to the temple.

From the point of view of Indian rose history this inscription is very significant indeed. Clearly, white roses which flowered throughout the year could only have reached India from China (from where continuous flowering roses evolved). Since the inscription dates to 1297 C.E., roses from China must have reached India substantially earlier. One speculates that Gujarat being near the Indian end of the fabled Silk Route, (connecting China through Central Asia to India, and Europe) roses could have reached along with traders. Another possibility is that Chinese ships calling at the great port of Surat on the Gujarat coast could have been the source of these new roses. (A fascinating account of how, for nostalgic reasons, Chinese sailors carried roses in pots, is available in Peter Valder's book "Garden Plants of China").

From Sintra we retraced our steps to London where we saw the Great Conservatory in Kew Gardens ( it was too early for roses) before leaving for the U.S., to Louisville, Kentucky, and our son's home. While there, we made two trips to Florida and neighbouring states, in search of warm



climate roses. On our first visit we saw several enchanting gardens including the world famous Fairchild Tropical Botanical Garden and the exquisitely landscaped Murakami Japanese Garden, in Miami. But there were no roses in either garden, though there was plenty else to admire, like unbelievably exotic gardenias and rare trees.

Our next trip to Florida started from Washington D.C., where we visited Hillside Garden in Montgomery County, Maryland, which has a sunken garden planted with a stunning collection of modern roses, including many All America Rose Selections, which do so well for us. But the highlight was, surprisingly, a glorious bush of that wonderful David Austin English rose, Graham Thomas, covered in golden yellow blooms as well as the exuberant profusion of white climbing hydrangeas on the ancient trees.

Meanwhile our rose friend Gene Waering had arrived, as we had planned a road trip to Florida seeing many rose gardens en route. We first drove to the charming university town of Asheville, North Carolina, where the well known Biltmore House and Garden are located. Belonging to the wealthy Vanderbilt family, the garden which covers several hundred acres, has a breathtaking collection of ornamental trees and plants. But we were focused on the newly started Rose Trial Ground, and its surrounding rose garden. The trial area which is meticulously maintained by Paul Zimmerman, features a host of entries from leading rose growers of the world. But the Gold Medal winner this year was a white climbing rose from an amateur, Bill Athy of New Zealand ( see Paul Zimmerman's article in this rose annual) which testifies to the fairness of the trial. In fact special care is taken to ensure that amateur raised roses are provided with a level playing field, to compete on equal terms with the professionals.

At Asheville we were delighted to see a plant of our Bodhisattwa (Magic East) in bloom in the garden of our hosts, Chris and Rick Manheim.

The next day we visited the well known rose nursery, Roses Unlimited, in Laurel, South Carolina., owned by distinguished rose growers and our friends Pat Henry and Bill Paterson. Roses Unlimited had given us a tremendous boost by introducing some of our roses in the US. We saw the beautifully maintained grounds and roses in Pat's home. Spectacular potted specimens of our roses, Faith Whittlesey, Krishna's Peach, and Emina, all grown to gigantic proportions, were a source of

great encouragement. Roses Unlimited specializes in growing roses on their own roots and the standard of the plants has to be seen to be believed, dispelling notions that roses can only be grown as budded plants.

Our next visit was to see the botanic garden in Orangeburg, southern South Carolina State, but en route we spent a very informative half day in the Magnolian Grove Arboretum of Dick and Anita Figlar. The Figlars are world authorities on the genus magnolia and their garden, charmingly located in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, features extensive plantings of an amazing range of magnolias, including several of the newly introduced evergreen species from South Asia.

The Edisto Memorial Garden in Orangeburg ('memorial' because it is dedicated to the soldiers of the state who had died in various wars) has a large formal rose garden planted with a host of modern varieties as well as a separate area housing a collection of heritage roses, mainly Noisettes. The spectacular appearance of the garden testifies to the careful upkeep, which is scenically situated on the bank of the 'black river', called Edisto. Tall trees, many of the southern U.S. magnolia, *M. grandiflora*, add to the overall effect.

At Edisto we were joined by our friend Pat Shanley, Vice President of the American Rose Society. Pat and Gene were pioneering the establishment of a comprehensive collection of rose species in Edisto and we were privileged to be part of the discussions with Jay Hiers, Superintendent of Parks. If all goes well, a new species rose garden will soon be a reality.

From Orangeburg to Jacksonville, Florida, and the Orange Park Club Continental hotel, scenically located in a heritage building with an amazing view of the river, where our talk and power-point presentation on Sustainable Roses was well received by the local society members. The emphasis of the talk on evolving better roses for warm climates was welcomed by the Florida rosarians who have long struggled with modern roses bred for cold climates.

Driving southwards our next stop was at the Leu Gardens in Orlando, where we met the Historic Roses Group of the Orlando Rose Society. The heritage rose garden was planted with many warm weather roses, the Chinas and Teas. Mrs. B.R. Cant, Celine Forestier, Old Blush and Nur Mahal, hybrid musk, were in splendid bloom.



**John Hook's pergola**



**Souvenir d' Alphonse Lavallee**



**Monserate, Sintra**





**'Sir George Watt' Rose in Monserrate**



**Somnath Pillars at Penha Verde, Sintra, Portugal**



**Sanskrit inscription in the 'Cintra Prashasti'  
at Penha Verde**



**Bodhisattva (Magic East) in Asheville garden**



**Biltmore rose garden**



**'Maggie' (our 'Kakinada Red')  
in Florida Southern College garden**



**At Logan Garden,' Sir George Watt' rose on brick wall behind, his family with us in front**



**Toll Cross Park , Glasgow trial ground**



**Queen Mary's Rose Garden, Regents Park, London**



Then further south to Boynton Beach to meet Ambassador Faith Whittlesey, after whom we had named a Tea rose. This long overdue visit was a delightful interlude with the Ambassador at her charming host, making us feel very welcome.

We also visited the nearby Cool Roses nursery owned by Geoff and Deb Coolidge. Geoff has mastered the art of budding roses on *R. fortuniana* rootstock, which is so suitable for Florida and similar climates.

The final part of our Florida sojourn was to the campus of Florida Southern College in Lakeland. Romantically landscaped with buildings designed by no less an architect than the legendary Frank Lloyd Wright, Lakeland is the site for an ambitious new rose garden on the college premises, designed by the well known rose personality who is attached to the college department of horticulture, Dr Malcolm Manners, in close association with Stephen Scanniello, President of the Heritage Rose Foundation, USA. We first had a rapid tour of the rose plantings and collection of Bermuda and other warm weather roses in the college greenhouses. A glorious fragrant bed of the found rose, the Hybrid Perpetual 'Maggie' was a stunning sight, perhaps the same rose as our own red garland rose Kakinada Red; as also a planting of Mrs. B.R. Cant. The new rose garden will be located on a slight slope with the rose beds in a vast semi-circle. During our visit we could see just the layout but as we write ( November) the planting of over 300 roses has been completed, including several Viru roses.

Then began the journey home, the first leg of which was from USA to Scotland. In the background of this visit was our hybrid gigantea rose, 'Sir George Watt', named in honour of the discoverer of the species gigantea in the mountains of Manipur State in 1882. Sir George Watt was one of the most distinguished 'renaissance' men of his times, with a matchless contribution not only in botany but also in education, art and science. One of his greatest accomplishments was the monumental 9 volume Dictionary of Economic Products of India, written as far back as 1906, but still a standard work of reference.

After our successful trip in 1990 to the same area where Watt collected *R. gigantea*, we had named a rose for him. With the help of Mr. Kasturirangan of KSG Sons, we had successfully sent a plant to be grown in the Logan Botanic Garden in south-west Scotland, very near the area where Sir George had lived after his return from India.

As a prelude to our present visit we had established contact with several of his descendants and family friends, as well as with Morag Williams, the archivist at the Royal Crichton Hospital where he had worked. It was arranged for us all to meet and drive to Logan to see the rose planted there by Curator Richard Baines. It was an inspiring moment to see it climbing over 15 feet high on the enclosed garden brick wall, looking perfectly at home. Sadly not in bloom- apparently it flowers only in late August.

Another connection with Scotland was the rose 'Benares Dawn', bred in Dehra Dun by Major Saksena in the 1970's. Along with the plant of Sir George Watt, Mr. Kasturirangan had sent two plants of Benares Dawn to Major Saksena's daughter, Ruhi Thallon (who has settled in Scotland). Originally Ruhi had contacted us in India and we had helped in locating this variety with Mr. Kasturirangan. It was a pleasure to see the buds of this lovely apricot rose, nicely established in its new home. (see article " 'Sir George Watt' accompanies 'Benares Dawn' to Scotland" in the 2011 Indian Rose annual)

The final part of our rose wanderings was a visit, along with Ruhi, to the well known Toll Cross Park in Glasgow. The beautifully maintained rose beds were in full bloom. Toll Cross Park is also recognized for its rose trials, which are judged by an international jury.

Our last stop was the Queen Mary's Rose Garden in Regents Park, London, where the Millar Gault designed catenaries for climbing roses and rose beds leading to a little lake, make for a gem of a garden. We were delighted to see a glorious bed of that old stalwart, Diamond Jubilee, in tremendous form.

Thus ended our travels in search of roses but the memories will stay with us.